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# FARM FACTS

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## TENNESSEE FARMERS PREPARING FOR UPCOMING CROP SEASON

With the 2000 crop season upon us, farmers across the Volunteer State are looking to erase the memories of 1999 when both crops and pastures suffered through a devastating summer drought coupled with poor commodity prices. Producers are planning for the upcoming growing season and are looking at both commodity markets and long term weather forecasts to help in their decision making. Based on information obtained from the March 1 Planting Intentions Survey conducted by the Tennessee Agricultural Statistics Service, many farmers intend to shift more acreage into corn and cotton this year at the expense of soybeans. Gene Danekas, State Statistician, commented that cotton in particular looked to be the best bet this year in terms of economic returns. "Prices are still not at the level producers would like to see, but they do look good relative to other commodities, and are up quite a bit from last year." Danekas went on the say that price is not the only contributing factor leading to the intended increase in cotton, "Farmers are also concerned that we may be heading into another drought this summer. As a result, many are choosing to plant more cotton due to it's ability to withstand dry conditions better than corn or soybeans." Survey results show that farmers plan to increase cotton by 30,000 acres from last year while decreasing soybean acreage by the same amount. If realized, this will lead to a total **cotton** acreage of 600,000 and total **soybean** acreage of 1,220,000. Farmers intend to increase **corn** acreage by 10,000 acres from last year and plant a total of 640,000 acres. **Winter wheat,** at 580,000 acres, is up 16 percent from a year earlier, while **burley tobacco** acreage decreased to 47,000 acres, mainly due to a reduction in quota. Danekas was quick to note that, "The survey results show only what producers intend to do as of March 1. Changes in prices and weather conditions will be major factors in determining what farmers actually choose to produce this year."

## COTTON ACREAGE CONTINUES TO INCREASE

After reaching a ten-year low in 1998, cotton acreage in Tennessee has steadily increased over the past two years. Improved prices and fears of another drought this summer are the two main reasons farmers plan to increase acreage in 2000. Based on Survey results, growers intend to plant 600,000 acres of cotton, if realized this will be 30,000 more than was planted in 1999 and the highest acreage in Tennessee since 1995.

## CORN PRODUCERS GETTING AN EARLY START ON PLANTING

An unseasonably warm Spring has allowed corn producers to make excellent progress with field preparation and a few producers have already planted a small amount of their intended acreage. Farmers intend to plant 640,000 acres, 10,000 more than was planted in 1999. Improvement in price is the major reason for the slight increase in acreage from a year ago. With warmer temperatures just around the corner, farmers are about to put planting into high gear.

## SOYBEAN ACREAGE DOWN FOR NOW

Soybean producers intend to plant 1.22 million acres this year, 30,000 less than the previous two years. At the current time, price and the threat of a summer drought are the main reasons for the shift in acreage. On the other hand, if farmers are unable to plant corn and cotton due to adverse weather early in the spring, some of this acreage will ultimately fall back into soybeans due to it's much wider planting window.

## TOBACCO ACREAGE A DIRECT RESULT OF CHANGES IN ALLOTMENTS

As it does traditionally, tobacco acreage responds directly to changes in allotments. With the significant reduction in quota for burley, growers expect to transplant 47,000 acres, the lowest acreage since 1996. Allotments for dark fire-cured tobacco are up in 2000 and so is intended acreage. As a result, Type 22, Eastern dark-fired and Type 23, Western dark-fired are estimated to be up 7 percent at 7,600 and 610 acres, respectively. Type 35, Dark air-cured is expected to be 630 acres, up 5 percent from a year earlier.

## HAY ACREAGE UNCHANGED FROM A YEAR AGO

Hay producers intend to harvest 1.88 million acres of this year, the same amount that was harvested in 1999. If realized, this will tie the record acreage. Except for a few cold snaps, Tennessee experienced a very mild winter. This was good news for the State's livestock producers. Last summer's drought hurt overall hay production and forced many to feed hay much earlier than normal. As a result, many had been concerned about hay shortages before the end of winter. Historically, hay acreage can fluctuate a great deal during the growing season as producers opt to cut additional hay from pastures or miss cuttings due to adverse weather.

## WHEAT ACREAGE UP, SORGHUM REMAINS UNCHANGED

Farmers seeded 580,000 acres of winter wheat last fall, 16 percent more than the previous year and the largest acreage in the State since 1996. The crop is currently rated in mostly good-to-excellent condition with little to no insect or disease problems reported. Producers are wrapping-up fertilizer and herbicide applications. Sorghum continues to be a minor crop in Tennessee. Producers intend to plant 20,000 acres, the same amount that was planted in each of the past three years.

## PLANTING INTENTIONS: TENNESSEE AND UNITED STATES, MARCH 1, 2000 WITH COMPARISONS

| Crop | 1998 | 1999 | Intended 2000 [1] | 2000/1999 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **TENNESSEE** | | 1,000 Acres | | Percent |
| Corn | 700 | 630 | 640 | 102 |
| Sorghum | 20 | 20 | 20 | 100 |
| Winter wheat | 570 | 500 | 580 | 116 |
| Soybeans | 1,250 | 1,250 | 1,220 | 98 |
| Cotton, all | 450 | 570 | 600 | 105 |
| Tobacco, all [2] | 59.42 | 59.27 | 55.84 | 94 |
| E. Dark-fired (22) | 7.30 | 7.10 | 7.60 | 107 |
| W. Dark-fired (23) | 0.59 | 0.57 | 0.61 | 107 |
| Burley (31) | 51.00 | 51.00 | 47.00 | 92 |
| One-sucker (35) | 0.525 | 0.60 | 0.63 | 105 |
| Hay [2] | 1,785 | 1,880 | 1,880 | 100 |
| **UNITED STATES** | | | | |
| Corn | 80,165 | 77,431 | 77,881 | 101 |
| Sorghum | 9,626 | 9,288 | 8,979 | 97 |
| Winter wheat | 46,449 | 43,431 | 43,245 | 100 |
| Soybeans | 72,025 | 73,780 | 74,871 | 101 |
| Cotton, all | 13,392.5 | 14,855.0 | 15,558.0 | 105 |
| Tobacco, all [2] | 717.61 | 644.25 | 500.70 | 78 |
| E. Dark-fired (22) | 11.15 | 10.85 | 11.60 | 107 |
| W. Dark-fired (23) | 4.19 | 4.12 | 4.41 | 107 |
| Burley (31) | 307.10 | 300.40 | 207.70 | 69 |
| One-sucker (35) | 2.98 | 3.45 | 3.63 | 105 |
| Hay [2] | 60,076 | 63,160 | 63,052 | 100 |

[1] Intended planting for 2000. [2] Acres harvested.

## FARMERS REPORT BIOTECHNOLOGY USAGE

The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) conducts March Agricultural Surveys in all states, except Alaska and Hawaii, each year. Randomly selected farmers across the United States were asked if they planted seed that, through biotechnology, was resistant to herbicides, insects, or both.

The following table is based on the responses from the March 2000 Agricultural Survey. Herbicide resistant varieties only include those developed using biotechnology. Conventionally bred herbicide resistant varieties were excluded from the March 2000 survey. Insect resistant varieties include those containing bacillus thuringiensis (Bt.) only. Stacked gene varieties include those containing biotechnology traits for both herbicide and insect resistance.

March 2000 Farmer Reported Biotechnology Varieties, **United States**
Percent of All Planted Acres

| | Insect Resistant (Bt) Only | Herbicide Resistant Only | Stacked Gene | All Biotech Varieties |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Percent* | *Percent* | *Percent* | *Percent* |
| Corn | 18 | 5 | 2 | 25 |
| Upland Cotton | 18 | 22 | 16 | 56 |
| Soybeans | NA | 52 | NA | 52 |

## TENNESSEE HORTICULTURE A $215 MILLION INDUSTRY

According to the 1998 Census of Horticultural Specialties, Tennessee producers of horticultural products accounted for $215 million in sales, up dramatically from the 1988 sales of $83 million. Sales at the U.S. level were $10.6 billion, up from $4.8 billion in 1988. The 1998 Census of Horticulture Specialties, conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), provides a wide variety of data relating to methods of production, production expenses, sales, number of operations by size, and area in production.

The Census of Horticulture Specialties, conducted every 10 years, included operations that grew and sold $10,000 or more in horticultural crops in 1998. Previous censuses included operations that grew and sold $2,000 or more in horticultural crops, and the Census of Agriculture used a $1,000 or more cut off.

The primary objective of the horticultural specialties census is to obtain a comprehensive and detailed picture of the horticultural sector of the economy. It is the only source of detailed production and sales data at the national level. The census of horticultural specialties provides detailed statistics to government agencies, academia, nursery and floriculture industries, and others on the size and structure of the horticulture industry for planning, policymaking, research, and market analysis.

**Tennessee highlights from this special census were:**

- At $215 million, Tennessee ranked 13th in the U.S. in total horticultural sales for 1998, up one position from 1988.
- Nursery plants, annual bedding/garden plants, and herbaceous perennials made up 63% of Tennessee's total horticultural sales for 1998 at $135 million.
- Tennessee nurserymen marketed more than 13 million nursery plants valued at nearly $92 million in 1998, ranking 9th in the U.S.
- Tennessee ranked 1st in the U.S. in the production and sales of Dogwood and Redbud trees.
- Tennessee ranked 2nd in the U.S. in the production and sales of Birch, Red Maple, Sugar Maple, Sweetgum, Willow, and Flowering Cherry trees.
- Tennessee ranked 4th in the U.S. in tobacco transplants sold during 1998 valued at $1.2 million.
- Tennessee producers spent $61.4 million on horticultural labor costs in 1998. Over 78% of this money was earned by employees working less than 150 days during the year.

The Census of Horticultural Specialties contains information on floriculture, nursery, and other specialty crops such as sod, mushrooms, food crops produced under glass or other protection, transplants of commercial production, Christmas trees, and seeds. To discover the wealth of horticultural and other agricultural statistics available from NASS, including hundreds of commodity production and price reports, or to review a full catalog of NASS products and services, visit the NASS Home Page at www.usda.gov/nass/. The 1998 Census of Horticultural Specialties, 1997 Census of Agriculture reports, State and County Profiles, Highlights, and a slide show presenting *Quick Facts* are accessible by clicking "Census of Agriculture."

**PRICES RECEIVED BY FARMERS: TENNESSEE AND UNITED STATES, MARCH 2000, WITH COMPARISONS**

| Commodity | Unit | TENNESSEE | | | UNITED STATES | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | March 1999 | February 2000 | March 2000[1] | March 1999 | February 2000 | March 2000[1] |
| | | Dollars Per Unit | | | | | |
| **FIELD CROPS** | | | | | | | |
| Winter Wheat | bu. | 2.03 | 2.36 | 2.40 | 2.53 | 2.37 | 2.37 |
| Corn | bu. | 2.58 | 1.92 | 2.20 | 2.06 | 1.98 | 2.03 |
| Cotton Lint | lb. | .575 | .414 | .413[2] | .551 | .459 | .478[2] |
| Cottonseed | ton | --- | --- | --- | --- | 108.00 | --- |
| Soybeans | bu. | 4.71 | 5.06 | 5.05 | 4.61 | 4.79 | 4.87 |
| Grain Sorghum | cwt. | --- | --- | --- | 3.16 | 3.08 | 3.28 |
| Tobacco | lb. | 2.135 | 2.045 | 1.945 | 1.810 | 1.905 | 1.880 |
| **LIVESTOCK & PRODUCTS** | | | | | | | |
| All hogs | cwt. | 25.90 | 38.80 | 38.90 | 28.00 | 39.90 | 41.30 |
| Sows | cwt. | 23.50 | 37.00 | 38.00 | 21.00 | 36.50 | 34.50 |
| Barrow & gilts | cwt. | 26.20 | 39.00 | 39.00 | 28.30 | 40.10 | 41.70 |
| All beef cattle | cwt. | 55.40 | 64.80 | 66.00 | 62.40 | 67.60 | 69.30 |
| Steers/heifers | cwt. | 69.60 | 84.00 | 86.00 | 65.50 | 71.20 | 72.80 |
| Cows | cwt. | 34.20 | 36.00 | 36.00 | 35.20 | 37.10 | 38.60 |
| Calves | cwt. | 80.50 | 98.00 | 102.00 | 87.30 | 105.00 | 107.00 |
| All milk [3] | cwt. | 18.10 | --- | --- | 15.00 | 11.80 | 11.80 |
| Fluid grade [3] | cwt. | 18.20 | --- | --- | 15.10 | 11.90 | 11.90 |
| Manufacture grade [3] | cwt. | 10.80 | --- | --- | 12.30 | 10.20 | 10.20 |

[1] Mid-month. [2] Based on purchases first half of month. [3] Estimates discontinued for Tennessee beginning January 2000.